

Warblers *Hippolais languida*, and Palaearctic shrikes. These birds appeared to have been attracted to the light of the township. They were particularly abundant in scrub around the small river valley immediately to the west, where a number of strong lights surround an electricity transformer. Practically no migrants were present in attractive-looking bushland habitat 5 km northwest of the township, nor in scrub 2 km to the southeast. On the night of 6/7 April, heavy rain at nearby Ngulia Lodge brought migrants within view of the lights at night, but practically none landed. At Mtito, on the other hand, the rain-sodden scrub contained hundreds of migrants at 07:00-09:00 on 7th. Whitethroats, were predominant, but there were many Sprossers, and a few Marsh Warblers, Olive-tree Warblers *H. olivetorum*, Upcher's Warblers and Sedge Warblers. The large proportion of Sprossers in the two Mtito Andei falls is noteworthy, as also is the presence of 29 among the 110 migrants caught in showers and mist at Ngulia by the author and D.E.G. Backhurst on 5 April 1981. Other recorded Tsavo spring falls (at Ngulia) have been in mid to late April, when the bulk of the Sprosser passage appears to be over.

It is interesting that on northward migration birds can be grounded by rain at Mtito when they are not grounded at Ngulia Lodge; the reverse tends to be the case during November-December. This presumably stresses the unfavourable position of the Ngulia lights during spring, situated as they are on the north-eastern side of the main ridge.

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BASRA REED WARBLERS *ACROCEPHALUS GRISELDIS* OVERWINTERING IN SOMALIA The existing knowledge of the wintering range of the Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis* in eastern Africa has been summarized by Pearson, Britton & Britton (1978). They also presented new information to show that it overwinters in substantial numbers in eastern Kenya, and predicted that it may well be found by the rivers of southern Somalia. The only occurrence of *griseldis* in Somalia until recently is the bird recorded at Kismayu (0°22'S, 42°32'E) by van Someren (1929) and Moltoni (1936).

On visits to Dannow (1°44'N, 44°32'E), close to the river Webi Shebelle in southern Somalia, one of us (JSA) saw and heard many large *Acrocephalus* warblers on 8, 9 and 21 November 1978. Many of these were obviously Lesser Swamp Warblers *A. gracilirostris*, previously unknown in Somalia, but at least one other species was present but clear views could not be obtained in the dense cover. On 4 December 1978 JSA with A.A. Murshid erected two mist nets at the same site and captured two Basra Reed Warblers. At the time it was not suspected that these were anything other than passage birds.

On 2 March 1979 we visited the site together, watched a *griseldis* singing, and soon caught it in a net. We returned on 31 March, and placed a line of seventeen 12-m mist nets across a small portion of the marsh. Three *griseldis* were caught that evening and a further four on the following morning. Associated species netted with these birds were Reed Warblers *A. scirpaceus* on 2 and 31 March and 1 April, African Reed Warblers *A. baeticatus* on 31 March and 1 April, Sedge Warblers *A. schoenobaenus* on 2 and 16 March and 1 April, and large numbers of Lesser Swamp Warblers and Winding Cisticolas *Cisticola galactotes*.

The area at Dannow consists of several large man-made lakes, embanked as water storage areas for irrigation schemes. Two of these, totalling 200-300 ha, have become almost entirely overgrown with a dense stand of *Typha* sp., from 3-4m high, and it is in this habitat that all these birds were found. The *Typha* stands are a major roosting site for Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*, which was the main object of our visits, but the area is a major wetland habitat in Somalia for large numbers of birds and the only known locality in the country for several species.

The birds caught on 4 December might well have been on passage, for further north in Ethiopia passage continues until at least 12 December (Ash 1980) and to the south at Ngulia in Kenya until 13 January (Pearson et al. 1978). The bird at Dannow on 2 March must have been overwintering, for return migration from further south does not seem to begin until the end of March. At this time, and in early April, birds are laying down pre-migratory fat in Kenya (Pearson et al. 1978) and southern Malawi (Hanmer 1979).

We have heard birds singing at Dannow, and at another site (difficult to work because of dense vegetation and the presence of elephants) at 38km south of Afgoi (1°58'N, 44°57'E) between 26 October and 3 February. We suspect this rich song with some of the qualities of a Nightingale's *Luscinia megarhynchos*, the paired notes of Reed Warblers (but lacking their 'scratchiness'), and without the 'croakiness' of Great and Clamorous Reed Warblers (*A. arundinaceus* and *A. stentoreus* respectively), may be *griseldis*, but confirmation is required.

One of the birds ringed at Dannow on 1 April 1979 was retrapped on 6 November 1979, though *Ortstreue* has been demonstrated already for this species on migration in Ethiopia (Ash 1978) and in winter quarters in Malawi (Hanmer 1979).

Comparing the present choice of habitat with those recorded by Pearson et al. in Kenya (coastal scrub and areas of *Suaeda*), and by Hanmer in Malawi (mostly in dense thicket, less often in *Typha* and mulberry), it is interesting to note the range of biotope selected by *griseldis*. The bird is now being found in many areas, and overwinters in southern Somalia and eastern Kenya from just north of the equator to as far south as southern Malawi and southern Mozambique, i.e. from c. 1°N to 16°S, a remarkably large area, but in which it may not occur throughout, for a bird with such a restricted breeding range in southern Iraq.

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